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SENATOR TO STALL C.I.A. APPOINTMENT

Montana Democrat Unhappy With F.B.I. Indian Policies During Webster's Term

By LESLIE MAITLAND WERNER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 13 — Senator John Melcher, Democrat of Montana, said today that he would delay the confirmation of William H. Webster to be Director of Central Intelligence because he is not satisfied with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's handling of crime on Indian reservations.

Mr. Melcher said he had told Mr. Webster, who has been Director of the F.B.I. for the last nine years, that the bureau's record on investigating crime on Indian reservations has been "totally unsatisfactory" and that changes are in order.

"There's a lot of crime unsolved and not investigated properly on the Indian reservations," he said.

Hold Placed on Nomination

He said he is also unhappy about a reorganization plan under consideration by the F.B.I., which would involve the transfer of supervisory authority over F.B.I. investigations in Montana from an office in Butte, Mont., to an office in Salt Lake City.

"I don't care for the reorganization plan and have been trying to dissuade him from doing it," Mr. Melcher said of Mr. Webster.

Mr. Melcher said he has placed a hold on the nomination, a prerogative of any Senator. The Senate can, by a majority vote, take up the nomination despite a hold. A Senator can then try to stall action further by means of a filibuster, which can be cut off by the votes of 60 Senators.

"How long do I want to filibuster?" Mr. Melcher said. "Not forever, that's for sure. But I'll prevent his name from being called up for as long as I can.

'It's a No Man's Land'

"I'm going to keep the hold on, hoping that common sense will prevail," he added. "It's a no man's land on many reservations in regard to the investigation and prosecution of many serious crimes."

Mr. Webster, who was unanimously approved for confirmation to the C.I.A. post by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on May 1, has been widely praised in Congress for his leadership of the F.B.I.

His confirmation to the C.I.A. was temporarily delayed last week by a hold placed on it by Senator Ernest F. Hollings, Democrat of South Carolina, who sought assurances that the F.B.I. would aggressively investigate security breaches at the American Embassy in Moscow. But he lifted the hold last Friday after he was informed that the F.B.I. was investigating the embassy security breaches.

A spokeswoman for the Senate Majority Leader, Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia, confirmed that a new hold has been placed on the Webster nomination, but said she could not reveal which Senator requested it.

Webster Spokesman Replies

She said Mr. Byrd hoped to bring the nomination to the Senate floor for a vote "as soon as the hold is lifted."

Bill Baker, a spokesman for Mr. Webster, said the director had spoken about the F.B.I. reorganization plan with Mr. Melcher and Montana's other Democratic Senator, Max Baucus.

"He told them a final decision would not be made until a new F.B.I. director arrives and then would be made in consultation with the Attorney General," Mr. Baker said.

Mr. Baker added, "Our agents in Montana have conducted numerous successful investigations which have been of assistance in solving crimes on Indian reservations."